BLACKBURN, DARWEN AND HYNDBURN

The Citizen

Wednesday, December 21, 2011 | The **local** newspaper for our community | blackburncitizen.co.uk

£120,000 rolls up for Green Sleeves

By NEIL DOCKING

Lotto cash for gran's community garden

AN environmental group which turned a wasteland into a community garden will receive almost £120,000 from the Big Lottery Fund.

Green Sleeves will be given £116,151 to expand the plot in Blackurn and provide training for people over the age of 16.

The project, between Oban Drive and Largs Road, is one of seven in the North West sharing grants totalling more than £1.8million from the Reaching Communities programme.

Grandmother-of-three and group founder Lauraine Fletcher, 55, said she was 'very excited' to secure the funding ahead of the garden's official opening in March next year.

She said: "I was shocked we got through the first stage. I never expected to get all this money. I've written to seven schools to see if they want to use the centre and they are mostly saying they would love to join in because it's free and not-for-profit.

"The children can grow stuff in beds, there is a poly-tunnel and greenhouse, and the ones that are over 16 can volunteer. There will be a lot of courses for them."

Mrs Fletcher became involved in community volunteering after complaining to the council about fly-tipping behind her home.

She was invited to join a litter-pick in the area and, with the help of family and friends, roped in around 70 youngsters. She formed Green Sleeves in 2008. It carries out litter picks, cleans off graffiti, and grits people's drives.

"The council, Tony Brooks of Twin Valley Homes, and Groundwork Trust have been fantastic. I'd like to thank Elaine Stafford, Joe Hart, Pat Adams, Linda Stafford, and Dave Duxbury too."

'VERY EXCITED': Green Sleeves founder Lauraine Fletcher at the community garden

Christmas cheer for booming firm

A Clayton-le-Moors firm will be celebrating a very merry Christmas after doubling its annual turnover to £12.6million.

STORY 4

KATIE'S PANTO ROLL

Katie Stainsby has gone from Dancing On Ice to skating without ice for her role in Dick Whittington at King George's Hall, Blackburn.

LEISURE 11

Sea Cadet's award

A career in the Navy could be on the horizon for Poppy Hestor, 15, from Clayton-le-Moors, who has won a Sea Cadets award.

STORY 3

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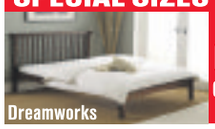

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Citizen In brief

Charity night in memory of 'Mim'

A charity night, in memory of **Francesca 'Mim' Sanna**, who suffered a fatal allergic reaction in 2007, will take place at the Poplar Club, in Accrington, on Boxing Day.

The event will feature the Swing Commanders, and all funds will go to the Anaphylaxis Campaign.

Visit www.poplarsocial.com for further details.

Policing update

An update on policing issues in Peel, Barnfield, and Woodnook, Accrington, will be given at Stanley Street Working Men's Club, on January 9, at 6.30pm.

Carols and Santa

The Salvation Army band will play at a carol service, to be held at Darwen Health Centre, from 11am on Friday, December 23.

Father Christmas will make a special appearance.

Poppy, 15, sails off with cadet award

By DAN CLOUGH

A fifteen-year-old girl from Clayton-le-Moors looks destined for a career in the Navy – after scooping a Sea Cadets award.

Poppy Hestor, who lives in Whalley Road, has won the Harry Green Memorial Trophy for her contribution to the local community.

The prize, from the Rishton branch of the Royal British Legion, is awarded to the best cadet in the community.

Mum Donna Hestor said: "We are very proud of her, but she kept it quiet.

"It was actually somebody else that told us.

"She can be quite shy and laid back, but I know she will be very proud inside.

"She would probably say that somebody else deserved it."

Mrs Hestor said Poppy, who is a pupil at Norden High School, in Rishton, has always wanted to join the Royal Navy.

She said: "She started going to the Sea Cadets about five years ago and she loved it.

"She has wanted to join the Navy ever since, and has started looking into how she gets in.

"She is going to get her A-Levels first after she leaves school."

First Lieutenant Mark Thompson was full of praise for teenager Poppy.

He said: "She's one of the better ones we have.

"Whatever we ask her to do, she is always willing and able to do it.

"She is a damn good cadet."

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Do you know someone who has been recognised for their achievements?

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Chefs find recipe for success

BLACKBURN College celebrated the achievements of budding young pastry chefs at a 'tasty' awards ceremony.

The college ran the Young Patisserie Chef competition, where Year 10 pupils from 15 schools across East Lancashire attended the college's catering and hospitality centre.

Over a month, 35 students learnt a variety of sweet and savoury recipes, including bread, pastry, and pies, and showcased their skills by preparing a buffet lunch for tutors, family and friends.

All of the students received certificates, with trophies presented to students who most impressed the judges.

Ian Sutherland, Blackburn College tutor, said: "I'm so proud of what these young students have achieved over the past four weeks. Each and everyone of them has shown a huge amount of commitment and enthusiasm. They are an absolute credit to their parents and their teachers."

The main award winners included John Whittle, 14, from Blessed Trinity RC College, Burnley; Grant Worsley, 14, from Clitheroe Royal Grammar School; and Ben Widdop, 15, from St Augustine's RC HIgh School, Billington.

Christmas cheer for booming firm

A HYNDBURN firm will be celebrating a very merry Christmas after doubling its annual turnover.

Clayton-le-Moors based IT specialists Cleverboxes is full of festive cheer after recording a remarkable year-end turnover of £12.6m.

The recession busting result comes after the firm set up a service providing goods for the 'IT savvy' business buyer.

The firm, which supplies everything from home entertainment products, laptops, cameras and professional IT equipment, has even out-performed the 'testing' target it set itself 12 months ago, much to the delight of founder and managing director Vernon Yerkess.

Now it hopes to expand even further by trading on Amazon and eBay.

Mr Yerkess said: "In 2010 we turned over just short of £7m and to double that, given the difficult financial environment, is a marvellous achievement and real credit to all concerned."

BOSS: Managing director Vernon Yerkess has plans to expand

The firm got off the ground just seven years ago and had a first-year turnover of £250,000.

Mr Yerkess said: "Without wanting to appear clever or flippant, we have tried to stick to our plans despite the recession.

"We know what we are good at and have not been afraid to invest and back our judgement during a period of general uncertainty.

"That policy, plus an unswerving commitment to satisfy our customer demands, has stood us in good stead. We have promised and delivered and therein probably lies the key.

"We have pushed ourselves for sure, but never at the risk of being unable to fully satisfy demand."

Cleverboxes now has a rapidly-increasing UK market and a major presence overseas. Moves to also integrate the main trading website with the likes of Amazon and eBay is said to have produced an 'immediate result'.

Mr Yerkess said: "We have invested £200,000 in our website development programme and can now offer four direct routes to market which sees us in a strong competitive position.

"The Amazon-eBay integration and transition has been seamless, producing some excellent early results over the first few weeks. We are very confident that this area will expand still further over the coming weekend and months."

Carols from choir

THE annual festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, sung by Blackburn Cathedral Choir, will take place on Friday, December 23, at 7.30pm.

Carols to be sung by the choir include A Spotless Rose by Herbert Howells, Adam lay y-bounden by Philip Ledger, and Ding Dong! Merrily on High, arranged by Mack Wilberg. The service, which takes place by candlelight, will begin with the singing of Once in Royal David's City by a solo chorister.

Doors open at 6.30pm, and a shortened edition of the service will be broadcast on BBC Radio Lancashire on Christmas Day.

Citizen In brief

Your coat can help the elderly

AN ACCRINGTON store is urging people to donate their old winter coats to help keep the elderly warm this winter. Wilkinson's on Market Square is supporting Age UK, collecting coats to be sold on through Age UK shops, with all profits going to vital winter warmth projects.

Customers can donate to the cause until Tuesday January 31.

Get creative

A CREATIVE writing group will meet at Accrington Library on Monday.

Starting at 6.30pm, the two-hour, informal drop-in session in St James' Street warmly welcomes new members. Admission is free and anyone interested is asked to call 01254 872385 for more details.

Festive care

SHELTERED housing provider Abbeyfield House, which has homes in Accrington, is offering free meals and overnight stays for elderly people that are on their own over Christmas. Call 0845 0523553 or visit www.abbeyfield.com.

Appeal for toys

AN appeal has been made for toys to be donated for the Christmas crib service at Blackburn Cathedral at 4pm on Christmas Eve. The toys will be passed to needy children and should be left wrapped under the tree in the cathedral.

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Citizen In brief

Treatment may be free...if you like!

FREE beauty treatment is on offer to 10 people – if a Darwen salon gets enough Facebook 'likes' before Christmas.

The Brookside Hair, Beauty and Wellbeing Centre in Bolton Road wants 350 people to like its Facebook page before Christmas Day. If it reaches that target, 10 people will be given free treatments.

DVD earns money

THE creators of a DVD chronicling the history of Darwen presented a cheque for £150 to the Friends of Darwen Library, where 'Darwen Days' was launched.

Beryl Thayne and Anne Hull received the donation from Dave and Marie Owen, at the group's monthly meeting.

It will go towards buying some more books.

Looking for solutions

MILL Hill Councillor Malcolm Doherty (right) will attend a ward solutions meeting for residents of Blackburn West from 6.30pm on January 11 at Mill Hill Community Centre, New Chapel Street. The meetings are a chance for the community to work together to improve the area.

Charities get boost from newspaper

DONATIONS: Lancashire Telegraph assistant editor John Anson hands cheques to Sharon Crymble and Gill Leacy from the hospice and Peter Jordan and Jane Ingham from Groundwork

TWO East Lancashire good causes have received cheques totalling more than £12,000 from a foundation set up by the Citizen and Lancashire Telegraph's owners.

Six cycles for adults with disabilities are to be bought with £9,054 presented to Groundwork Pennine Lancashire for its project called Active Spaces.

The machines, three trikes and three hand-cranked 'New Speeders,' will allow more people to take part in outdoor activities.

A cheque for £3,000 was presented to East Lancashire Hospice for the charity's 'Raise the Roof' appeal being run with the newspapers.

The Gannett Foundation donated the money, a charitable trust set up by Gannett – the firm which owns the Citizen and Lancashire Telegraph.

Cash celebration

By DAN CLOUGH

VOLUNTEERS were rewarded as more than £4,000 was handed out to community groups in the latest round of the Darwen Community Awards.

The awards, funded jointly by Crown Paints and Darwen Town Council, started this year and have seen £15,000 handed out.

The awards were presented at a ceremony in Darwen town centre last week.

Cheques went to the National Autistic Society, Kittens Nursery, Project BME, St Cuthbert's Amateur Dramatic Society, Darwen Subscription Bowling Club, Nightsafe, Cheer Valley Cheerleaders, Reachout and the Friends of Sunnyhurst Wood.

Vernon Kinrade, of Crown, said: "We are proud to back the awards. It is a chance to put something back into the community we are part of.

"It means we also see first-hand some of the great community work that goes on in Darwen and reward those responsible for it.

"We have had a presence in Darwen for almost 200 years and ensuring we remain at the heart of life in the town is a source of pride to our staff."

Town councillors Brenda Cronshaw and Stephen Potter were on the judging panel for the awards.

Mrs Cronshaw said: "We are so grateful to have Crown Paints, one of the largest employers in the town, prepared to get involved with Darwen Town Council. It has spread a lot of happiness for the people of Darwen."

Coun Potter said unsuccessful applicants could reapply next year.

He added: "It's a good sch-eme that gives money to groups that struggle to get any. If groups got money this year then they can't reapply for two years, but if they didn't they can reap-ply as Crown has promised to run the awards again next year."

'Wise up for winter' firms told

WATER board bosses are urging East Lancashire businesses to avoid the misery of mopping up a wet and washed-out new year.

Last year, many small businesses shut up shop as festive temperatures plunged, only to be faced with a flood on their return to work.

United Utilities said frozen and burst pipes caused misery to many people, and the vast majority of problems were due to customers' own internal pipework.

Rose Francis, campaign manager at United Utilities, said: "Last year was a record-breakingly cold winter and this year we don't want to take chances.

"Shops and other properties left empty over holidays, or even short periods of very cold weather, were hit by a deluge of burst pipes after the cold weather turned the water inside them to ice. But you can protect yourself."

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The Citizen

Andrea honoured for foiling crime

By SAM CHADDERTON

A counter-terrorism officer has been honoured for her 'outstanding service and dedication' to preventing violent extremism.

DI Andrea Bradbury received the George Herbert Redman Award 2011 ahead of last week's Lancashire Police Authority meeting, in recognition of 25 years' service.

Chairman Malcolm Doherty presented the award to DI Bradbury, who has gone 'beyond the call of duty' in the force's Prevent Counter Terrorism Branch.

She joined the force in 1986 and has enjoyed a long and illustrious career, spending the vast majority of her service within the communities of East Lancashire, where she first served as a uniformed constable.

As geographic inspector for Blackburn between 2003 and 2008, she was instrumental in creating a safer community by driving forward huge reductions in crime, and increasing local community confidence in the police.

DEDICATION: DI Andrea Bradbury with Malcolm Doherty, left, and Steve Finnigan, Lancashire Chief Constable

Since 2008, DI Bradbury has spearheaded the Government's Prevent Strategy as part of the Constabulary's Counter Terrorism Branch, and is recognised as a key figure within the department which achieved national recognition for its expertise in preventing violent extremism through community engagement.

Also in the honours was PCSO Maria Fetherstone, from Chorley, who won the Community Support Officer of the Year Award 2011 for her passion for driving down crime in the area, and making it a safer place for residents.

In her four years working in the ward, anti-social behaviour has dropped by 10per cent and criminal damage by more than 22per cent.

Diana on song

Diana Vickers, 20, has released a second new song, Kiss Of A Bullet, as a free download Christmas present for her fans. The song is free to anyone who signs up to the Huncoat pop star's mailing list at her official website www.dianavickersmusic.com It follows Music To Make Boys Cry, her first new release in almost a year.

Citizen In brief

New sign plan for technology site

BOSSES at the Blackburn Technology Management Centre in Challenge Way have applied for permission to erect a new advertisement sign on the site.

A decision on whether to approve the applicaton will be made in coming weeks by Blackburn with Darwen Council.

Revamp for pub

AN ACCRINGTON pub has been revamped. Thwaites have just finished giving the Boar's Head, Burnley Road, a facelift, decorating inside and out and replacing external signage.

Mayor's mission

HYNDBURN'S mayor is to make a Christmas visit to hospital patients next week. Mayor Collette McCormack (right) is to visit Accrington Victoria Hospital on Wednesday.

Epiphany service

THE Epiphany Churches Together in Longridge Carol Service will be held on Sunday January 8 at 6.30pm in St Wilfrid's RC Church..

Vocation school gets green light

A PIONEERING vocational school has been given the green light to open in the heart of Accrington.

The new Hyndburn Studio School, which will combine academic qualifications with work experience and apprenticeships, has been officially approved by the Depadrtment for Education.

The new facility, to open at the Waterside Centre, St James' Court, is the first of its kind in Lancashire.

Students will still study for their key GCSEs in English, maths, science and ICT alongside a vocational pathway and study for a BTEC Diploma in that specialism. The school will cater for 100 students in its first year, rising to 300 by year three.

Studio schools are a new state school model for 14 to 19-year-olds, aimed at tackling skills shortages.

The school has been heralded as a potential forerunner in changing the way schools operate forever. It will have small class sizes, partnerships with local businesses, and more emphasis on work experience. Sixth form students, for example, will complete two days of paid experience a week.

It is to be launched by Accrington and Rossendale College and Rhyddings Business and Enterprise School next September.

College principle Stephen Carlisle said: "We are thrilled to have received official approval for the Hyndburn Studio School as we are con- vinced it will have a hugely positive impact on the next generation of Hyndburn's workforce. The studio school will prepare them for a career by giving them work experience from day one so that they develop their skills at some of the most prestigious companies in Pennine Lancashire.

"We already have over 40 companies on board for the school, who will help us shape curriculum, provide both paid and unpaid work experience to our learners and give them the best possible chance of excelling in their chosen field of work."

Parents interested in the school should go online to www.hyndburn studioschool.co.uk.

SMART: Students at Hyndburn Studio School model their new uniforms

Anger over closure of waste centre

A DECISION to close a waste recycling centre has been slammed by a county councillor.

Great Harwood county councillor Ciaran Wells is calling for extra scrutiny of the decision to close four Lancashire waste recycling centres. The decision made by the deputy leader of Lancashire County Council, Albert Atkinson, would also see the Great Harwood centre close.

Coun Wells said: "It is a dark day for the people of Lancashire when Coun Atkinson ignores a call made by over 17,000 people to keep our recycling centres open. He has ignored the arguments and pushed ahead with his and the county council's plans to let the people of Lancashire down.

COUN ALBERT ATKINSON

"The centre at Great Harwood is very well used, performs a front line service and contributes to the local environment and local economy by keeping people in the town."

He added: "I would invite the scrutiny committee and Coun Atkinson to come to Great Harwood and listen to evidence direct from members of the public who are directly affected by this decision. No consultation was undertaken formally with Hyndburn Council and the people of Great Harwood deserve to have their voice heard."

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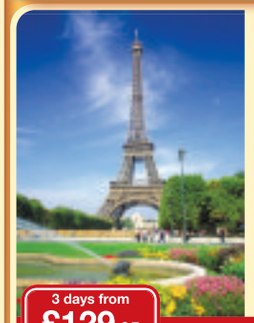

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Traditional toys are still the tops

By DAN CLOUGH

TRADITIONAL toys are at the top of children's lists to Santa Claus this year.

And shop bosses in East Lancashire said they have seen a return to the toys of yesteryear.

Top-selling toys include Lego, a model pirate ship and a puppet theatre play set.

Danish favourite Lego is the number one toy for Blackburn youngsters, according to the staff at Mercers in Darwen Street.

The toy has been around for 62 years, but it remains popular today, having developed licensed themes, including Batman and Indiana Jones.

Rose Fowler, from the shop, said: "Lego has been selling really well and is the number one toy for boys.

"They've got the licences for Star Wars and Harry Potter which makes it sell well.

"It is good that children still want Lego as it is a constructive toy where you have to sit down and build something.

"It is obviously still capturing their imaginations if it is still so high on their lists."

Beth France, of Timeless Toys in Gisburn Road, Barrowford, said it was important to maintain the traditions of classic toys. And she said the top toys in her shop this year have been a Le Toy Van model pirate ship and Melissa and Doug's Puppet Theatre play set.

PRESSIE: Charlotte Harrison finds a Moxie Girls doll at Mercer's, Blackburn

Ms France said: "These days, toys are all-singing all-dancing, and the toy plays on its own while the child just sits and watches. Children get so much more out of toys like the pirate ship and the puppet theatre.

"They are proper toys that encourage sharing, and the parents can also get involved.

"It is nice when toys can involve the whole family."

She said children need to be given a chance to use their imagination. Our toys look lovely, which is why the children notice them," she said.

"Things like the pirate ship look exciting and the children want to play with them."

Ms France said it was not just children that got enjoyment from classic toys.

She said: "They help to bring back memories for adults. We got a lot of grandparents coming in who want their grandchildren to play with the toys they did.

"They ask for older toys like Jack-in-the-boxes, but I can't get hold of them for love nor money."

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CitizenTime

One of Fu actors in demand at 82

After more than 50 years in showbusiness, US actor James Hong, 82, is still much in demand. He has appeared in Chinatown, Blade Runner and Big Trouble In Little China. Hong also lent his vocal talents to Kung Fu Panda 2, out now on Blu-ray Triple Play and DVD.

60 SECONDS WITH ... JAMES HONG

WERE YOU AMAZED BY THE QUALITY OF ANIMATION ON THE FIRST KUNG FU PANDA?
I could not believe it. It seemed like everything was done more or less like I was acting on camera with Jack Black, except we were those characters, Po and Ping. It fitted so well.

YOU MUST HAVE BEEN THRILLED TO LAND ANOTHER ANNIE (ANIMATION) AWARD NOMINATION FOR KUNG FU PANDA 2?
Yes, because when you do voices, you're just one person in the studio most of the time, and you wonder, 'How did I do?'

HOW LONG WERE YOUR RECORDING SESSIONS ON THE MOVIES?
Over the course of two or three years. It takes that long.

IN 1955 YOU MADE YOUR FILM DEBUT WITH THE CLARK GABLE MOVIE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE. DID YOU HAVE ANY IDEA THEN HOW LONG YOUR ACTING CAREER WOULD LAST?
Of course not. When I went to Hollywood, I finished my engineering and I was still a stand-up comic at that time. To enter that movie with a small role, then to have that career blossom into 500 on-camera roles, TV and movies... looking back it's totally unbelievable.

HOW WAS IT WORKING ON THE CLASSIC FILM CHINATOWN?
That has to stay in my memory forever, working with that cast and Roman Polanski. The experience connected with it, and the scenes we made, and acting opposite Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway was something an actor will never forget. To me Faye Dunaway should have received the Academy Award for that role.

What's on

theatre

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU — Royal Exchange, Manchester, until Saturday, January 14.
GASLIGHT – New Millenium Theatre, Waterfoot, Saturday, January 21 to Saturday, January 28.
TWO — Royal Exchange, Manchester, Saturday, January 21 to Saturday, February 25.

gigs

THE STUMBLE and SLACK ALICE — The Grand, Clitheroe, Thursday, December 22.
ONE DIRECTION — Manchester Apollo, Thursday and Friday, December 22 and 23.
SHAKEY'S BROTHER — The Grand, Clitheroe, Friday, December 23.
THE SWING COMMANDERS — Mellor Brook Community Centre, Thursday, December 29.
NEW YEAR'S EVE WITH DARREN HAYES — Manchester Academy, Saturday, December 31.
ALL TIME LOW — Manchester Apollo, Saturday, January 21.
CECIL SHARP PROJECT — Burnley Mechanics, Thursday, January 26.
PANIC! AT THE DISCO — Manchester Apollo, Friday, January 27.
ROOTS MANUVA — Manchester Ritz, Friday, January 27.
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Katie gets skates on

ON A ROLL: Katie Stainsby on the special skates she uses for her panto role

Katie Stainsby has gone from Dancing On Ice to skating without ice for her role in Dick Whittington. JOHN ANSON found out more

Families going along to enjoy Dick Whittington this Christmas might not realise they are watching what is believed to be a theatrical 'first'.

For ice skater Katie Stainsby is using revolutionary 'off ice' skates to allow her to glide around the stage at King George's Hall, Blackburn, without the need for any ice.

The skates, which fans of Dragon's Den may remember having seen on the show, are being used in a pantomime for the first time.

"They are as near as you can get to ice skating," said Katie. "In the past you'd use roller skates, but they don't give you the same control to do moves you'd expect to see on ice. It is very exciting and I'm having a great time."

Katie has a series of solos during the show and joins the dancers for a number of energetic routines.

A star of the Hot Ice Show at Blackpool Pleasure Beach, she is best known for having partnered rapper Vanilla Ice in the last series of Dancing On Ice.

Dancing on Ice saw Katie reunited with Karen Barber, one of the judges on the show. "I used to come to Blackburn Ice Arena to train with Karen and Steven Pickavance when I was younger," said Katie. "So it's nice to be coming back to the area."

As she lives in St Annes, Katie can also enjoy the luxury of spending Christmas at home.

■ **Dick Whittington, King George's Hall, Blackburn, until Saturday, December 31. Details from the box office on 0844 847 1664.**

Cinema round-up

SHERLOCK HOLMES: A GAME OF SHADOWS (12A) Guy Ritchie's action-packed sequel to his 2009 reinvention of the fictional detective, starring Robert Downey Jr and Jude Law.

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: CHIPWRECKED (U) Dave (Jason Lee) heads off on a luxury cruise with singing critters Alvin, Simon and Theodore and the feisty Chipettes.

WRECKERS (15) A married couple move back to his childhood village, but a visit from the husband's brother exposes the lies in the couple's relationship. Stars Benedict Cumberbatch.

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